The embodiments of the invention in which an exclusive property or privilege is claimed are defined as follows:

1. A computer-implemented method for determining whether a software application is properly installed on target computer, comprising:

obtaining a validation manifest associated with the software application, the validation manifest comprising validation actions for determining whether the software application is properly installed on the target computer;

executing the validation actions in the validation manifest; and

based on the results of the executed validation actions, determining whether the software application is properly installed on the target computer.

2. The method of Claim 1, wherein the validation actions comprise a validation program associated with the software application that, when executed, returns results indicating whether aspects of the software application are properly installed on the target computer.

3. The method of Claim 1, wherein the validation actions comprise a validation routine in a loadable module associated with the software application that, when called, returns results indicating whether aspects of the software application are properly installed on the target computer.

4. The method of Claim 1, wherein the validation actions comprise a comparison instruction to compare an aspect of the software application to corresponding validation response information in the validation manifest.

5. The method of Claim 4, wherein the aspect of the software application compared by the comparison instruction is the modification date of a file provided as part of the software application.

6. The method of Claim 4, wherein the aspect of the software application compared by the comparison instruction is the file size of a file provided as part of software application.

7. The method of Claim 4, wherein the aspect of the software application compared by the comparison instruction is the version number of a shared library module used by the software application.

8. The method of Claim 4, wherein the aspect of the software application compared by the comparison instruction is the version number of a library module provided as part of the software application.

9. The method of Claim 4, wherein the aspect of the software application compared by the comparison instruction is a system registry associated with the software application.

10. The method of Claim 4, wherein the aspect of the software application compared by the comparison instruction is a system environment setting.

11. The method of Claim 1, wherein the validation manifest further comprises installation information for installing the software application on the target computer.

12. The method of Claim 1 further comprising, upon detecting a negative result from executing a validation action, executing a corrective action associated with the validation action.

13. A system for validating whether a software component is properly installed on a target computer, the system comprising:

a processor; and

a memory, the memory storing and software application, and further storing a validation module, wherein the validation module:

obtains a validation manifest associated with the software application, the validation manifest comprising at least one validation action for determining whether the software application is properly installed on the target computer;

executes the validation actions in the validation manifest; and

based on the results of the executed validation actions, determines whether the software application is properly installed on the target computer.

14. The system of Claim 13, wherein the at least one validation action comprises a validation program associated with the software application that, when executed, returns results indicating whether aspects of the software application are properly installed on the target computer.

15. The system of Claim 13, wherein the at least one validation action comprises a validation routine in a loadable library associated with the software application that, when called, returns results indicating whether aspects of the software application are properly installed on the target computer.

16. The system of Claim 13, wherein the at least one validation action comprises a comparison instruction to compare an aspect of the software application to corresponding validation response information in the validation manifest.

17. The system of Claim 16, wherein the aspect of the software application compared by the comparison instruction is the modification date of a file provided as part of the software application.

18. The system of Claim 16, wherein the aspect of the software application compared by the comparison instruction is the file size of a file provided as part of software application.

19. The system of Claim 16, wherein the aspect of the software application compared by the comparison instruction is the version number of a shared library module used by the software application.

20. The system of Claim 16, wherein the aspect of the software application compared by the comparison instruction is the version number of a library module provided as part of the software application.

21. The system of Claim 16, wherein the aspect of the software application compared by the comparison instruction is a system registry associated with the software application.

22. The system of Claim 16, wherein the aspect of the software application compared by the comparison instruction is a system environment setting.

23. The system of Claim 13, wherein the validation manifest further comprises installation information for installing the software application on the target computer.

24. The system of Claim 13, wherein the validation module, upon detecting a negative result from executing a validation action, executes a corrective action associated with the validation action.

25. A networked computing environment for validating whether a software application is properly installed on a client computer, the system comprising:

a client computer upon which the software application is installed; and

an administrator computer, the administrator computer operable to:

obtain a validation manifest relating to the software application, the validation manifest comprising validation actions for determining whether the software application is properly installed on the client computer;

carry out the validation actions in the validation manifest; and

based on the results of carrying out the validation actions, determine whether the software application is properly installed on the client computer.

26. The networked computing environment of Claim 25, wherein the validation actions comprise a validation program associated with the software application which, when

executed, returns results indicating whether aspects of the software application are properly installed on the client computer.

27. The networked computing environment of Claim 25, wherein the validation actions comprise a validation routine in a loadable library on the client computer associated with the software application which, when called, returns results indicating whether aspects of the software application are properly installed on the client computer.

28. The networked computing environment of Claim 25, wherein the validation actions comprise a comparison instruction to compare an aspect of the software application installed on the client computer to corresponding validation response information in the validation manifest.

29. The networked computing environment of Claim 28, wherein the aspect of the software application compared by the comparison instruction is the modification date of a file on the client computer installed as part of the software application.

30. The networked computing environment of Claim 28, wherein the aspect of the software application compared by the comparison instruction is the file size of a file installed as part of software application.

31. The networked computing environment of Claim 28, wherein the aspect of the software application compared by the comparison instruction is the version number of a shared library module used by the software application.

32. The networked computing environment of Claim 28, wherein the aspect of the software application compared by the comparison instruction is the version number of a library module installed as part of the software application.

33. The networked computing environment of Claim 28, wherein the aspect of the software application compared by the comparison instruction is a system registry on the client computer associated with the software application.

34. The networked computing environment of Claim 28, wherein the aspect of the software application compared by the comparison instruction is an system environment setting on the client computer.

35. The networked computing environment of Claim 25, wherein the validation manifest further comprises installation information for installing the software application on the client computer.

36. The networked computing environment of Claim 25, wherein the administrator computer is further operable to, upon detecting a negative result from executing a validation action, execute a corrective action associated with the validation action.

37. A computer-readable medium having computer-readable instructions which, when executed, carry out the method comprising:

obtaining a validation manifest associated with the software application, the validation manifest comprising validation actions for determining whether the software application is properly installed on the target computer;

executing the validation actions in the validation manifest; and

based on the results of the executed validation actions, determining whether the software application is properly installed on the target computer.

38. The method of Claim 37, wherein the validation actions comprise a validation program associated with the software application that, when executed, returns results indicating whether aspects of the software application are properly installed on the target computer.

39. The method of Claim 37, wherein the validation actions comprise a validation routine in a loadable module associated with the software application that, when called, returns results indicating whether aspects of the software application are properly installed on the target computer.

40. The method of Claim 37, wherein the validation actions comprise a comparison instruction to compare an aspect of the software application to corresponding validation response information in the validation manifest.

41. The method of Claim 40, wherein the aspect of the software application compared by the comparison instruction is the modification date of a file provided as part of the software application.

42. The method of Claim 40, wherein the aspect of the software application compared by the comparison instruction is the file size of a file provided as part of software application.

43. The method of Claim 40, wherein the aspect of the software application compared by the comparison instruction is the version number of a shared library module used by the software application.

44. The method of Claim 40, wherein the aspect of the software application compared by the comparison instruction is the version number of a library module provided as part of the software application.

45. The method of Claim 40, wherein the aspect of the software application compared by the comparison instruction is a system registry associated with the software application.

46. The method of Claim 40, wherein the aspect of the software application compared by the comparison instruction is a system environment setting.

47. The method of Claim 37, wherein the validation manifest further comprises installation information for installing the software application on the target computer.

48. The method of Claim 37 further comprising, upon detecting a negative result from executing a validation action, executing a corrective action associated with the validation action.

49. A computer implemented method for determining whether a plurality of software applications are properly installed on a target computer, the method comprising:

identifying a plurality of software applications installed on the target computer; and

for each identified software application:

obtaining a validation manifest associated with the software application, the validation manifest comprising validation actions for determining whether the software application is properly installed on the target computer;

executing the validation actions in the validation manifest; and

based on the results of the executed validation actions, determining whether the software application is properly installed on the target computer.